

II. Listing of the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

1. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

providing a tool comprising a hollow body including a circumferential wall having a distal end, the tool also comprising an extension that protrudes from the circumferential wall beyond the distal end and forms a platform that is open in a radial direction and has a side surface facing in the radial direction,

providing an expandable structure;

introducing the tool and the expandable structure into a bone having an interior volume occupied, at least in part, by cancellous bone;

positioning the platform near the expandable structure, with the side surface of the platform located between the expandable structure and a first region of the cancellous bone which is not to be compressed;

forming a cavity in a second region of cancellous bone by expanding the expandable structure against the side surface of the platform with the platform serving as a barrier to induce the expandable structure to expand radially away from the side surface of the platform to compress the second region of the cancellous bone, while the first region of the cancellous bone remains substantially uncompressed, and

introducing a filler material into the cavity.

2 – 3. (Canceled).

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein during the expanding the expandable structure displaces at least a portion of a cortical bone within the bone.

5 – 11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the filler material comprises bone cement.

13 – 22. (Canceled).

23. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the tool and the expandable structure are introduced into a vertebral body having an interior volume occupied, at least in part, by cancellous bone.

24. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the extension protrudes from the distal end of the hollow body from only a ~~relatively small~~ circumferential portion of the circumferential wall of the hollow body.